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The Right Man For CIA

Adm. Stansfield Turner, nominated by President Carter to head the Central Intelligence Agency, appears to be so highly qualified for the job that one can only wonder why he wasn't selected in the first place, instead of Ted Sorensen.

The admiral has a record for intellectual achievement and leadership going back to the days when he was at the top of his class at the U.S. Naval Academy, graduating ahead of Midshipman Carter. He since has held increasingly important positions of responsibility proving that he is a capable administrator and manager.

He has no experience in the Central Intelligence Agency and so

qualifies as the "outsider." President Carter wanted to head up the agency with a view to reforming some of its erring ways. Yet as a senior military commander, he obviously appreciates the critical nature of intelligence information to the national security.

Perhaps most important of all, however, he has a reputation as something of a maverick yet managed to make it to the top in a service that ordinarily has little use for nonconformists. So the CIA will not be led by a stick-in-the-mud traditionalist.

Turner's appointment is likely to run into some opposition from senators who contend for specious reasons that the CIA, essentially a military activity, should not be headed by a military man, whatever his background.

Adm. Turner's impressive credentials doubtless will lead to his confirmation, leaving political observers to wonder if the President appointed Sorensen in a Machiavellian move to pay costless tribute to the Kennedy faction of his party and clear the way for the man he wanted all along.